

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1870

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 19, 2007

Title: An act relating to a Washington state day of remembrance for Juneteenth.

Brief Description: Recognizing Juneteenth as a day of remembrance.

Sponsors: Representatives Pedersen, Ross, Lovick, Bailey, Hunt, Hasegawa, Pettigrew, Skinner, Flannigan, Darneille, Roberts, Newhouse, Hankins, Walsh, Appleton, Santos, Lantz, McCoy, Rodne, Schual-Berke, Ormsby, Upthegrove, Morrell, Kessler, Williams, Kenney, McDermott and Chase.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/07/07, 94-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 3/19/07 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Kline, Pridemore and Swecker.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. Celebrations date back to 1865 when on June 19, Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war had ended and the slaves were free. This event occurred two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation became official on January 1, 1863.

Currently, 14 states recognize Juneteenth as an official holiday, including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Alaska, and California.

Juneteenth is a name derived from a portmanteau of the words June and nineteenth.

Summary of Bill: June 19 is declared as a day of remembrance for the day the slaves learned of their freedom and will be recognized as Juneteenth.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Juneteenth day is a day that can bring people together, when communities collectively recognize the impact of slavery and acknowledge how that history still binds both sides together. At a recent town hall meeting, many people came forward to say that they feel affirmed and included by this type of remembrance. Juneteenth recognizes a significant day in our history.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Pederson.